

61545

ORIGINAL

4423 oxbow trail
Cottonwood, AZ
86326

August 9, 1999

U.S. Department of Transportation Docket
Docket No. (FAA99-5926) - 4
400 Seventh St, SW.
Washington DC 20590

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
DOCKET SECTION
99 AUG 16 AM 11:41

Dear Sir,

Enclosed is info ^{prepared by} ~~from~~ the Sierra Club
concerning FAA's proposal to amend the
special operating rules for air tour flights
in the Grand Canyon.

I will not be able to attend the FAA meeting
Aug 17th at Northern Arizona University in
Flagstaff, Arizona.

I am very concerned about the degradation
of the "quiet" air space over the Grand
Canyon. Air tours seem to be a profitable
business for airplane tour owners. They are
permitted to increase the trips over ^{and below} the
Canyon walls.

I have observed increased flights over
the town of Sedona, Arizona, a most
beautiful place with towering red rocks
and the Oak Creek Canyon - a big
tourist attraction (4 million per year).
The area is definitely affected by air
tours.

I realize the name of the game is money
for the Government, still we must
preserve our natural wonders from the
pollution from aircraft. Please register
my concern.

Sincerely,

Janette Kuwatt



- The FAA should require the removal of all flights below the rim.
- The FAA has allowed the noise to get worse at the Canyon. The number of air tours has doubled from 50,000 annually in 1987 to around 120,000 now. The FAA should both reduce and cap the number of air tours to at least 1987 levels to achieve the natural quiet that the law mandates.
- The FAA proposal falls short of even the weak standard for restoration of the natural quiet. The agency says that only 41% (improved from 32%) of the Park **will be quiet** 75% of the day. All the rest of the Park has aircraft noise up to 100% of the **day!** This does not even meet the weak Park Service standard of 50% of the Park with aircraft noise "only" 25% of the day (with no noise limits in the other 50% of the park). Substantial restoration of natural quiet should mean most of the Park most of the time, for example 75% of the Park, 100% of the time.
- The FAA should close the Dragon Corridor (which is located just west of Hermit's Rest.) This corridor impacts the Hermit, **Boucher**, Waldron, and **Tonto** trails.
- The FAA proposal would wrap tour flights closer around the south side of Point Sublime. This is an unacceptable way to treat visitor experience at such a spectacular and noted backcountry vista site, one the Park's own management plan says will be a future focus of increased North Rim visitation.
- The Grand Canyon is one of the naturally quietest places on Earth. It is a place where visitors expect to get in touch with nature and enjoy the "natural quiet," including the sounds of the wind, trickling streams, or the call of a condor. They should not have to listen to aircraft up to every three minutes as occurs in many locations. Quiet deserves as much protection as other park resources.
- Flight free zones need to be large or they do not work. The FAA should demand larger flight free zones in order to protect areas like Marble Canyon and the Powell Plateau.
- Over 94% of Grand Canyon National Park is proposed wilderness; it should sound like a wilderness.



- The FAA should require all air tours at the Canyon to use the quietest aircraft.

If you cannot attend the hearing, please send comments to the FAA before September 7, 1999.



- The FAA is consistently failing to meet the mandate to "substantially restore the natural quiet" in the 1987 law. The agency should follow the law.